

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A reel spinning gaming device that allows a player to play multiple games, wherein each reel spin constitutes a game, the device comprising:

a plurality of selectable reels having symbols thereon, wherein each selectable reel displays an outcome symbol after being spun;

5 a selection system operatively associated with each selectable reel, wherein the selection system designates a subset of the selectable reels as the initial active reels for an initial game;

an actuating system operatively associated with the selectable reels, wherein the actuating system spins the initial active reels to achieve an outcome symbol combination for
10 the initial game;

a prize controller, wherein the prize controller makes a prize determination as to whether a prize is to be awarded based upon the outcome symbol combination of the initial game; and

a reselection system, wherein the reselection system substitutes a non-active reel for
15 an active reel from the initial game, thereby designating a new set of active reels for a second game, the new set of active reels for the second game including a newly substituted active reel and remaining active reels, and wherein the newly substituted active reel is spun for the second game while the remaining active reels are not spun for the second game;

wherein the outcome symbol from the newly substituted active reel is used in
20 conjunction with the outcome symbols from the remaining active reels to produce a outcome symbol combination for the second game, and wherein the prize controller performs a prize determination for the second game.

2. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the reselection system further substitutes a non-active reel for an active reel from the second game, thereby designating a new set of active reels for a third game, the new set of active reels for the third game including a newly substituted active reel and remaining active reels, and wherein the newly substituted active reel is spun for the third game while the remaining active reels are not spun;
- 5 wherein the outcome symbol from the newly substituted active reel is used in conjunction with the outcome symbols from the remaining active reels to produce a outcome symbol combination for the third game, and wherein a prize determination is performed by the prize controller for the third game; and
- 10 wherein the substitution, designation, and spinning of active reels, and the prize determination of the outcome symbol combinations produced in association therewith, is repeated for any additional games until a pre-established criteria has been satisfied.
3. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the reselection system substitutes more than one non-active reel for more than one active reel when designating a new subset of the selectable reels as active reels.
4. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the substitution of a non-active reel for an active reel comprises shifting the selectable reels that are designated as active reels to the left by one reel within the plurality of selectable reels.
5. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the substitution of a non-active reel for an active reel comprises shifting the selectable reels that are designated as active reels to the right by one reel within the plurality of selectable reels.

6. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the substitution of a non-active reel for an active reel comprises randomly selecting the reels that are to be designated as active reels within the plurality of selectable reels.

7. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the reselection system that substitutes non-active reels for active reels is player controlled.

8. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the reselection system that substitutes non-active reels for active reels is computer controlled.

9. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the selectable reels are mechanical components.

10. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the selectable reels are video components.

11. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the selectable reels include both mechanical and video reels.

12. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the active reels are designated as active by highlighting the active reels.

13. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the active reels are designated as active by de-emphasizing the non-active reels.

14. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the active reels are designated as active by removing the non-active reels from view of the player.

15. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the active reels are juxtapositioned within the plurality of selectable reels.

16. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the active reels are non-contiguous within the plurality of selectable reels.

17. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein only the initial active reels are spun in the initial game, and wherein only the newly substituted active reel that is so designated in each following game is spun in that following game.

18. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein all of the plurality of selectable reels are spun in the initial game for increased player excitement, but only the outcome symbol combination from the initial active reels is used by the prize controller to provide a prize determination for the initial game; and

5 wherein all of the plurality of selectable reels, except for the remaining active reels, are spun in the second game for increased player excitement, but only the outcome symbol from the newly substituted active reel in conjunction with outcome symbols from the remaining active reels are used by the prize controller to provide a prize determination for the second game.

19. A reel spinning gaming device, that allows a player to play multiple games, wherein each reel spin constitutes a game, the device comprising:

a plurality of selectable reels having symbols thereon, wherein each selectable reel displays an outcome symbol after being spun;

5 a selection system operatively associated with each selectable reel, wherein the selection system designates a subset of the selectable reels as the initial active reels for the initial game, and wherein, for a second game, the selection system substitutes a non-active reel with an active reel from the initial game, thereby designating a new set of active reels for the second game, the new set of active reels for the second game including a newly
10 substituted active reel and remaining active reels;

an actuating system operatively associated with the selectable reels, wherein the actuating system spins the initial active reels to achieve an outcome symbol combination for the initial game; and wherein the actuating system spins the newly substituted active reel in the second game to achieve an outcome symbol while not spinning the remaining active reels
15 in the second game; and wherein the outcome symbol from the newly substituted active reel in the second game is used in conjunction with the outcome symbols from the remaining active reels to produce an outcome symbol combination for the second game; and

a prize controller, wherein the prize controller makes a prize determination as to whether a prize is to be awarded based upon the outcome symbol combination of each game.

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20. The gaming device of claim 19, wherein the substitution, designation, and spinning of active reels, and the prize determination of the outcome symbol combinations produced in association therewith, is repeated for any additional games to which the player is entitled.

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21. A reel spinning gaming method implementing a plurality of selectable reels having symbols thereon, wherein each selectable reel displays an outcome symbol after being spun, and wherein a player engages in multiple games, each reel spin constituting a game, the method comprising:

5 selecting a subset of the plurality of selectable reels as initial active reels in an initial game;

spinning the initial active reels to achieve an outcome symbol combination in the initial game;

making a prize determination based upon the outcome symbol combination, and
10 awarding a prize, if appropriate, in the initial game;

substituting a non-active reel for an active reel from the initial game, thereby designating a new set of active reels for a second game, the new set of active reels for the second game including a newly substituted active reel and remaining active reels;

spinning, for the second game, the newly substituted active reel to achieve an outcome
15 symbol; and

making a prize determination based upon the outcome symbol from the newly substituted active reel in conjunction with the outcome symbols from the remaining active reels, and awarding a prize, if appropriate, for the second game.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

substituting a non-active reel for an active reel from the second game, thereby designating a new set of active reels for a third game, the new set of active reels for the third game including a newly substituted active reel and remaining active reels;

- 5 spinning, for the third game, the newly substituted active reel to achieve an outcome symbol while the remaining active reels are not spun;
- making a prize determination based upon the outcome symbol from the newly substituted active reel in conjunction with the outcome symbols from the remaining active reels, and awarding a prize, if appropriate, for the third game; and
- 10 repeating the substituting, designating, and spinning of active reels, and the making of prize determinations of the outcome symbol combinations produced in association therewith, for any additional games to which the player is entitled.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the substituting of non-active reels with active reels comprises substituting more than one non-active reel with more than one active reel, thereby designating a larger number of newly substituted active reels and a smaller number of remaining active reels for a subsequent consecutive game.

24. The method of claim 21, wherein the substituting of reels comprises shifting the reels that are designated as active reels to the left by one reel within the plurality of selectable reels.

25. The method of claim 21, wherein the substituting of reels comprises shifting the reels that are designated as active reels to the right by one reel within the plurality of selectable reels.

26. The method of claim 21, wherein the substituting of reels comprises randomly selecting the reels that are to be designated as active reels within the plurality of selectable reels.

27. The method of claim 21, wherein the substituting of a non-active reel with an active reel is player controlled.

28. The method of claim 21, wherein the substituting of a non-active reel with an active reel is computer controlled.

29. The method of claim 21, wherein the selectable reels are mechanical components.

30. The method of claim 21, wherein the selectable reels are video components.

31. The method of claim 21, wherein the selectable reels include both mechanical and video reels.

32. The method of claim 21, wherein the active reels are designated as active by highlighting at least a portion of the active reels.

33. The method of claim 21, wherein the active reels are designated as active by de-emphasizing the non-active reels.

34. The method of claim 21, wherein the active reels are designated as active by concealing the non-active reels from the player's view.

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35. The method of claim 21, wherein the active reels are juxtapositioned within the plurality of selectable reels.

36. The method of claim 21, wherein the active reels are non-contiguous within the plurality of selectable reels.

37. The method of claim 21, wherein only the initial active reels are spun in the initial game, and wherein only the newly substituted active reel that is so designated in each following game is spun in that following game.

38. The method of claim 21, wherein all of the plurality of selectable reels are spun in the initial game for increased player excitement, but only the outcome symbol combination from the initial active reels is used by the prize controller to make a prize determination; and

5 wherein all of the plurality of selectable reels except for the remaining active reels are spun in the second game for increased player excitement, but only the outcome symbol from the newly substituted active reel in conjunction with outcome symbols from the remaining active reels are used by the prize controller to make a prize determination for the second game.

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39. A reel-spinning gaming device, the device comprising:

a plurality of selectable reels having symbols thereon, wherein each selectable reel displays an outcome symbol after being spun;

means for accepting a wager from a player to purchase game play, wherein each reel
 5 spin constitutes a game;

means for selecting a subset of the plurality of selectable reels as initial active reels in
 an initial game;

means for spinning the initial active reels to achieve an outcome symbol combination
 in the initial game;

10 means for making a prize determination based upon the outcome symbol combination,
 and awarding a prize, if appropriate, in the initial game;

means for substituting a non-active reel for an active reel from the initial game,
 thereby designating a new set of active reels for a second game, the new set of active reels for
 the second game including a newly substituted active reel and remaining active reels;

15 means for spinning, for the second game, the newly substituted active reel to achieve
 an outcome symbol; and

means for making a prize determination based upon the outcome symbol from the
 newly substituted active reel in conjunction with the outcome symbols from the remaining
 active reels, and awarding a prize, if appropriate, in the second game.

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40. The method of claim 39, further comprising:

means for substituting a non-active reel for an active reel from the second game,
 thereby designating a new set of active reels for a third game, the new set of active reels for
 the third game including a newly substituted active reel and remaining active reels;

5 means for spinning, for the third game, the newly substituted active reel to achieve an
 outcome symbol while the remaining active reels are not spun; and

means for making a prize determination based upon the outcome symbol from the newly substituted active reel in conjunction with the outcome symbols from the remaining active reels, and awarding a prize, if appropriate, for the third game.

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41. A gaming device comprising:

a plurality of reels that are divided into a group of active reels and a group of inactive reels for an initial game, wherein each reel displays a symbol after being spun;

means for spinning and subsequently stopping the active reels to determine whether a
5 winning result has occurred in the initial game;

means for substituting at least one inactive reel for at least one active reel from the initial game to create at least one newly active reel and remaining active reels for a second game;

means for spinning and subsequently stopping the at least one newly active reel for the
10 second game; and

means for combining the symbol displayed on the newly active reel along with the symbols displayed on the remaining active reels to determine whether a winning result has occurred in the second game;

whereby the substitution and spinning of a newly active reel and determination of
15 game results continues for each following game until a predetermined criteria has been satisfied.